

SMITE

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE



INSIDE: DIARY OF LOKI, HOW TO TAKE DYNAMIC PHOTOS IN SMITE & MORE! GameOnMag.com

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SMITE

BATTLEGROUND OF THE GODS

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From The Editor

Welcome to the Official SMITE Magazine Issue #16! If this is your first issue: Welcome! This magazine is a completely community driven project; the artwork, articles and photography are all created by community members just like you.

In this issue we have a guide that explains how you can make the high quality screenshots that you see in this magazine every month. We also have an interview with Baurus, the caretaker of the Arena and we see what happens when we reunite Xbalanque with his brother Hunahpu and give them a Mage kit to boot.

For the tryhards amongst you readers we also have a discussion on whether Hand of Gods is still worth it and take a look at the changes to the Arena map, and most importantly, how this affects gameplay.

We've got plenty more stuffed in this issue, so whether you're looking for information, entertainment or just something to pass the time in the bathroom, we've got you covered. Now sit back, relax, and enjoy!

Steve Greenfield
Managing Director

Kris West
Editor

Greenfield *KWest*



EDITORIAL

Editor-in-Chief - Steve Greenfield

Editor - Kris "Kaostic" West

Production Mgr - Jorg "GreyAethelwulf" van der Velden

Production Mgr - Anthony "Baelfyre" Badalamenti

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Staff Writer - Derrick "absoluterev" Moody

Staff Writer - Kris Stutter

Staff Writer - Jacob "jakethedog53" Crawford

Staff Writer - Joe Demetriou

Staff Writer - Jon V

Staff Writer - Joshua "Epipsychidion" Newberry

Staff Writer - Thomas "Covertactician" Shaw

Staff Writer - Timothy "Tim63" Tian

Staff Writer - William O'Hara

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Artist - Amanda Callesen

Artist - Dorine Pittet

Artist - Emily "Failmuffin" Barnes

Artist - Holly "Kisekii" Webster

Artist - Gwendoline Martin

Artist - Maria Manrique Ccopa

Artist - Michael Mendonça

Artist - Michele "Katar" Trocchia

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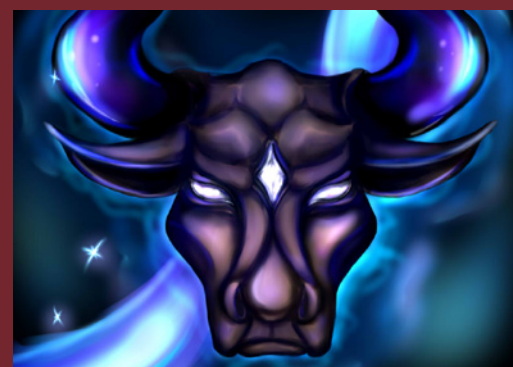
DESIGN

Lead - Kris "Kaostic" West



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DIARY OF... LOKI

By Timothy Tian Zhang Wai

Welcome to another addition to the 'Diary Of...' series. This month, we delve into the inner feelings and thoughts of The Trickster God, Loki, as he roams the grounds of the Siege map.

[0:00] Another day in this particular Mayan region. How I despise this place. Well, at least it's far less retching than that Roman arena. With the dense fog and thick jungles, privacy might actually be possible here.

[0:10] I have Hel, Bakasura and Medusa as my supposed 'comrades'. Can't complain much. Even though I wouldn't normally associate myself with them, or anyone for that matter, they are better company than most. I highly doubt I would be on the receiving end of complaints from these loners. Hope this finishes sooner rather than later. I was in the middle of a very fine book.

[1:12] Luck is on my side today. The harpies did not give as much of a fight as they normally would. Must be this awful weather brewing. I don't feel like giving much of a fight either. In my lane, I find myself pitted against Ra and uhhh...Thor. Perhaps I spoke too soon regarding my luck.

[6:43] Nothing much has happened so far. I group up the little vermins with my decoy and my dear daughter clears them up for me. She deserves a better residence than the wretched realm of Hell. Sometimes, I wish I was a better father.

[9:25] Ra is rather low on Health. How absurd of him not to return to his base. A quick backstab and Ra is out for the time being. I vanish and decide to make myself scarce before my fool of a brother decides to remove me from the picture as well. I take the scenic, albeit longer, route through the Jungle as I make my way back to base.

[12:11] Our Siege Juggernaut has arrived. I wonder who decided to forcefully 'tame' these wild beasts. Poor creatures. But I guess that's just the way it has to be. Those in control are allowed to run amok and put their power on display while these so-called 'unworthy' beasts are cast aside or put to use for the gain of these gods. How barbaric.

[14:54] With the aid of the majestic beast, we take down the tower on the left. It left us just as the tower was destroyed. Just before the light went out of its eyes, my dear daughter decided to make an appearance for the creature's passing. We proceed to get our vengeance by wiping the enemy out completely. I vanish and start the killing process with my daggers, allowing their bleeding to make them giddy. We ignore the little ones. My decoy is more than capable of handling them. Medusa's gaze turns Ra and Apollo to stone, immediately taking them out. Ymir is left with a fraction of health as he very slowly tries to escape our clutches. The combination of Hel's Hinder and Bakasura's little minion army makes all forms of escape quite nearly impossible. Ymir falls.

[16:30] We chase Thor through the jungle. I can't recall how he became this sneaky and slippery, teleporting with Mjolnir and erecting walls in our faces. I simply cannot believe that the people back home have the decency to call me the Trickster God when their future king here is far trickier than me. I spot him at the edge of the Speed camp, ready to escape with this move he calls 'Anvil of Dawn' back

home. I chuckle everytime he proudly exclaims this 'move' of his out loud. His stupidity is even more obvious than I thought was possible. I vanish and made an incision in his back, now trickling with blood.

[17:00] We get a Deicide.

[19:59] One tower remains. We decide to leave the Wild Juggernaut alone. This was not its fight and it had no business in our proceedings. We were all rather low on Health. My team decides to leave for base just after completing the buff camps. It was not to be for half of the team. My brother and Apollo decide to 'drop in', killing Medusa and I. I take in the beauty of nature from the eyes of my daughter as I wait to respawn.

[22:35] Why do these minions follow me? No reward awaits them, even if they do somehow manage to kill me. They deserve their own freedom and to be treated with respect instead of being almost irrelevant at this point of time. Maybe I should stop calling them 'vermin'. Putting in a reminder to have a word with the leader of these vermin.





[35:05] Another teamfight breaks out. Ymir's actions tells me that he isn't in the fighting mood either. There could be two reasons for this: 1. We had mutual respect for each other or 2. This blistering heat must be getting to him. I imagine it must be a lot worse for him, being made up of ice and all. Unfortunately, the other three give everything they have. Ymir and Medusa are dead.

[37:15] Bakasura throws out his minion army again and together, we take down Apollo and Thor. Father should see us now. It is clear that I was always a better tactician for war. Unlike my brother who prefers to appear out of nowhere in the thick of things, I resort to tactics such as creating diversions and using stealth as a mode of travel. With his arrogance, it's a wonder he still able to wield Mjolnir.

[40:00] Ra's healing is too much for us to handle. We let him retreat as we removed their Phoenix from existence. It's a good thing these birds are able to rise again from their ashes or I would have faced a difficult time killing them.

[41:40] We proceed to their Titan. With a heavy heart, I give the killing blow on it. It explodes all around us. I'm sorry, Titan.

[42:00] Another day has come and gone. I hope I don't get called upon so soon. All this killing makes me feel uneasy. I don't kill, I play tricks. Even that has gotten exceedingly mundane. Back to the book then. Which page was I on again? ■

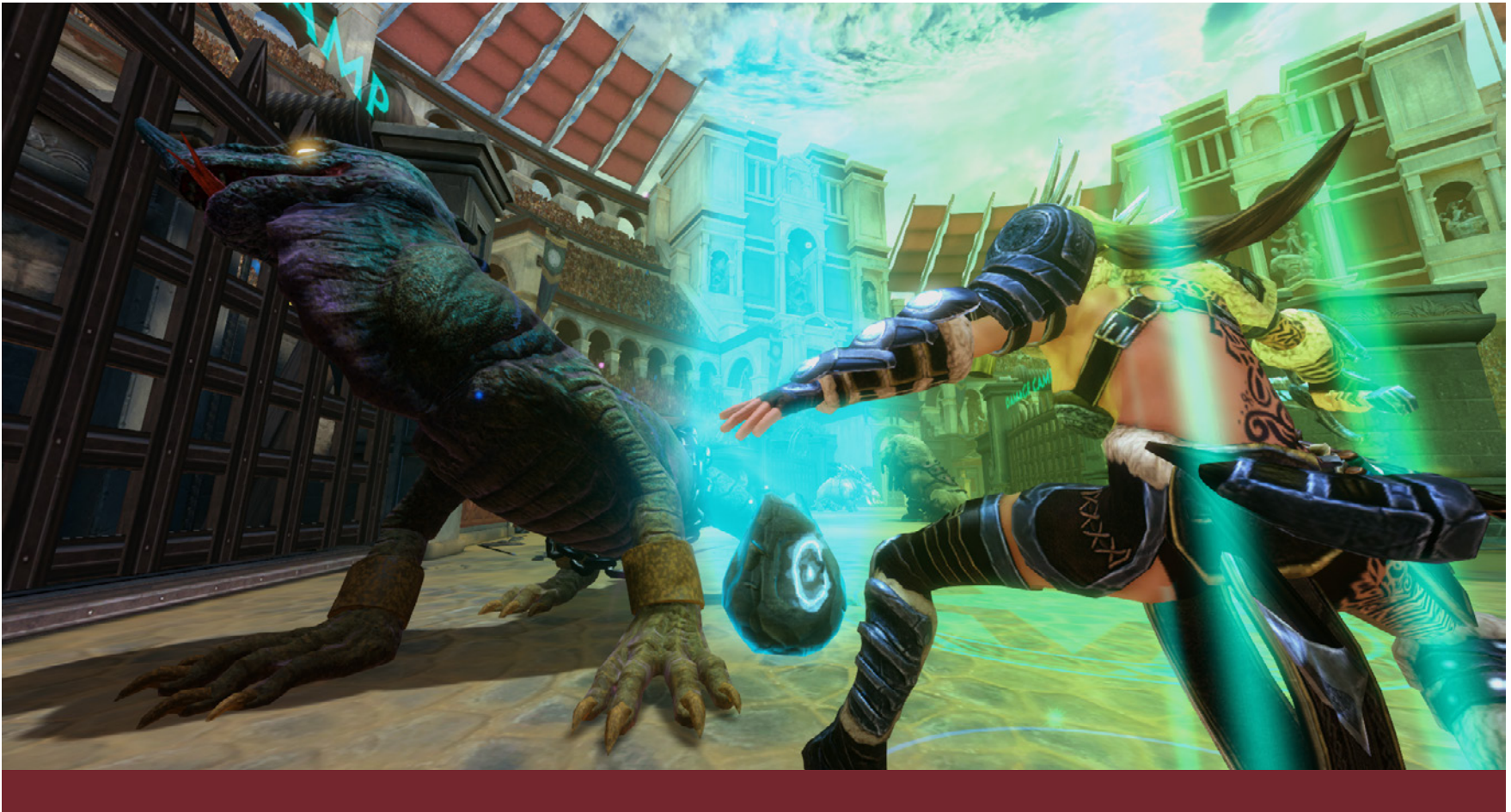
By Timothy Tian Zhang Wai



TAKING DYNAMIC PHOTOS IN SMITE

~~~~~ By Jason Tate & Jorg van der Velden ~~~~~

*Month after month, the Official SMITE Magazine is filled with shots of the gods and the battlegrounds they fight their daily battles on. This time around we decided to give you guys a little peek in the kitchen, as it were, and show you how these screenshots are taken, how the controls work and the things to look out for!*



Let's start at the beginning and talk about the capture software you're going to need. While SMITE does have its own screenshot command, using capture software allows you to tweak more settings and take higher quality images. When looking for a program to use, make sure that you can choose the file format of the captured images. Another feature that will make your screen-shotting-life a lot easier is repeat screen capture. This means that you can move around your subject and the program will take a screenshot every couple of seconds until you turn it off by pressing the hotkey again. This frees up your snap finger and allows you to find real time screen shots.

The importance of being able to control the file type is that you want images to be saved in .PNG file format. This file format results in the highest possible quality of the images and is easier to work with in case you want to edit the image. If you want to share your work but the .PNG file size is too large for the platform you're using (for example Twitter), .JPG is the best alternative. These files are significantly smaller, but sacrifices a little bit of

quality to do so, making it less suited for editing.

Now that you've got your software setup, it's time to find some games to spectate. The easiest method is going to the recorded games under the 'Wisdom' tab. Here you'll find a large database of (Ranked) matches that you can use. Just look for the god or gods you want to capture and hop into the match.

If you want a very specific combination of gods, or just want to catch your friends in action, you can right-click on their name in your friends list and click spectate. After a delay of three minutes you'll be pulled into the match and are free to roam the map. You can also do this by inputting the /spectate [username] command in chat. This bypasses the friends list and allows you to spectate matches of any player you know the username of. This is especially useful when you want to take shots of pro players or community faces when they're not in Ranked games.

Controlling the camera is done with the keys shown in the table. Not much to tell about it except just going in spectator mode and playing around until you get a feel for them.

| CONTROLS    |                                 |
|-------------|---------------------------------|
| Mouse       | Rotate Camera                   |
| Q           | Descend Camera                  |
| E           | Ascend Camera                   |
| W           | Move Camera Forward             |
| S           | Move Camera Backward            |
| A           | Move Camera Left                |
| D           | Move Camera Right               |
| O           | Toggle Spectator Overlay On/Off |
| P           | Toggle UI On/Off                |
| Pause/Break | Pause/Play Match                |
| Page Down   | Slow Down Time                  |
| Page Up     | Speed Up Time                   |

With the mechanical side of things out of the way, we’re going to take a look at how to make the shots themselves amazing. The quality will greatly improve if you take some time to immerse yourself into the god(s) you want to portray, so some research will be necessary. How much research varies with each god and photographer, but with the right amount and type

of research the subject eventually comes alive around you. Playing a few games with the god, watching/reading the lore and listening to music that fits the god’s personality all help with immersing yourself. And there is no such thing as too much research.

Deciding on a theme of the shot before hand will also help increase the quality of your images, giving you a central focus to look for. Understanding the character and the design philosophy behind the model and matching this with the theme you decide upon will result in really impressive images.

Let’s give you an example and go through this process with Bellona. After looking into her lore, we find out that she is not just a soldier, but a conqueror. Her resting pose is tall and proud, befitting of someone who is used to being in command but is also no stranger to battle. Listening to larger-than-life music, like the Lord of the Rings or Game of Thrones soundtracks, will get your mind in the same epic mindset that Bellona as a goddess represents. All that is left is taking the actual shot itself!

Before we finish this quick little guide into making



impressive screenshots, we want to give you a couple of quick tips to help you out. Don't be afraid to snap a screenshot so you can look at it later. If it catches your eye, even for just a second, it's worth adding it to your collection. Remember to appreciate the amount of time, passion and hard work that is put into the design of your subject. It is important to display all that effort in the best light possible, and it will result in higher quality shots.

If you're interested in seeing how these shots are taken and talking with the photographer, follow Jason Tate on Twitch at [twitch.tv/cyberrank10](https://www.twitch.tv/cyberrank10) and @Cyberrank10 on Twitter. ■

*By Jason Tate & Jorg van der Velden*



# VERSUS - TO HOG OR NOT TO HOG.

By Joe Demetriou & Thomas Shaw

**H**ello everyone, and welcome to this issue of Versus. Today, we will be talking about Hand of the Gods and its recent changes. If you haven't been keeping up to date with SMITE, then recently Hand of the Gods received quite a large change. First of all, the rank of the "Hog" decides how many NPCs (Harpies, Cyclops, etc) it hits. So at rank 1 it will hit a singular minion/jungle camp, on top of that it hits the highest health target. At rank 2 it hits 2, etc. Also, there was a change to the execute on Wrath of the Gods. Wrath of the Gods (Hog 3) used to execute objectives such as Gold Fury and Fire Giant at 25%, it longer does that. Instead, it deals 900 damage to objectives. The bar on objectives also no longer goes yellow at 25%, instead it turns yellow when it's at 900 health. The question is, do we still pick up Hog or not? And that my friends, is the question of this article. Covertactician and Blitz will both be discussing if Hog is still worth the active slot.

**Cover, For** - Hello, my name is Covertactician. I have been playing this game since Tyr came out, and I have been hooked ever since. I have quite a lot of experience within this game from casual, ranked, and competitive experience. I'm going to be arguing for picking up Hog, as it still is a valuable asset.

**Blitz, Against** - Hi guys, I'm Blitz, been playing Smite since early last year, mostly casual with some ranked, keen fan of watching the SPL. I have the hardest task of arguing against the Hog which is almost the bread and butter of the jungler, support and solo as I believe the recent changes to Hog slows the camp clearing process, and how it is pointless to pick up in the first place.

**For** - So while the changes to Hog might have been heavy, I still don't think it has changed its position in the meta. I can guarantee you that in





solo, this is something that should never be picked up. But the support role and jungle? Well that is a different story. If you don't pick this up you are reducing your clear time. The smaller minions in camps have always been easy to kill, and having them there does not make a difference. You need that 480 damage on the Large camp minion, as that takes the longest to clear, and is also the one that holds the buff. If you don't have Hog, you're going to arrive in lane late and end up missing minions, in both duo lane and solo lane.

**Against** - Personally for me the Hog changes have lightened the effectiveness of it. When it comes to the support and jungle roles, I found the previous hog stats made you more effective at clearing xp camps and jungle buffs. It made it a quicker process. I do also agree that the smaller camps are easy enough to clear with the changes. But, when fighting the buff camps early on due to the changes, I find you take no extra damage without Hog, and you get to lane without missing any minions. It offers up a spot for a new active. So without it you're in a way better situation.

**For** - It does reduce clear time. On average, if you are without Hog while the enemy has hog, you'll miss around 1-2 minions. That doesn't seem like a lot, but think of the pressure you are going to lose. The enemies are going to have higher control of the lane,



and in the jungle due to picking up Hog. If you miss out on Hog to get another active, then you are also missing out on the 1000 damage it deals at rank 3. While 1000 doesn't seem like a lot, it's a decent secure. It means you don't have to waste Ultimates like "I'm

a Monster” or “Earthshaker” just to possibly secure an objective. Hog is instant, cheap, and as I said before, necessary.

**Against** - I do agree the damage it does is important, but I find that the new hog just doesn’t have the same impact as it did before. I would prefer “Shell” with its 15% protection or even “Creeping Curse” with its slow. Yes it means you’re slower at clearing but it means your laning phase is a lot better, as it increases kill potential or decreases your chance of death.

**For** - Sure, “Creeping Curse” and “Shell” might be useful in lane. But you can still buy those actives as a second active, you do have two active slots, after all. As I said countless times, without Hog you are slowing down clear, and decreasing your chance at getting a major objective. Objectives like Fire Giant and Gold Fury are quite important right now with the meta being really hard to develop a lead. Hog can be the difference between winning a game and losing a game, like it was before. There’s also no other reason than “I want another active” that you wouldn’t pick up Hog.

**Against** - Yes killing the Gold Fury and Fire Giant is important in the game and without hog you have no solid secure. But without Hog you can choose to get different actives. For instance you can get “Purification beads” against Ymir. This can be extremely useful and critical for engagements / disengagements. Another example is “Creeping Curse”, which is extremely strong against gods with attack speed, or healing gods. My final example being “Shell”, which can help save you and your teammates in a teamfight.





**For** - But Hog doesn't always need to be a secure. It can be upgraded into "Fist of the Gods", which instead offers a 1 second stun along with the ability to hit 3 minions. It's nothing glamorous, but it means you can still pick up Hog in the early game, and then have a strong Crowd Control late game.

**Against** - True, but all "Fist of the Gods" can do is a 1 second stun. It's not even that if you go into Hog 3, which instead offers 1000 damage to objectives. These are near to useless in a team fight. It's almost likely you're only going to ever hit 1 person with the stun, but even then it's overkill. Anti-heal, protections, movement speed, all these

can be countered by other actives. These are almost always going to be more useful than a 1 second stun.

So in short, there's negatives and positives to picking up Hand of the Gods and not picking it up. If you don't pick it up, you have an extra active slot but slower clear. You also don't have a definite secure, but you also don't have an active that's barely used. On the flipside, if you do pick it up you have faster jungle clear, but one less active slot. You also have an extra secure but also an active that isn't used often. Well that's been this issue of Versus, make sure to check out the rest of the articles! ■

*By Joe Demetriou & Thomas Shaw*

# A CONVERSATION WITH BAURUS, THE ARENA MAINTENANCE MAN

~~~~~ By Jacob Crawford ~~~~~



At 7'2" and 290lb, Baurus is hard to miss—yet somehow people never see him. He saunters out of the Arena and hunches through a darkened archway. He shuts the door behind him, muffling cheers, and sits at a bench across from me. He lays his head against the stone wall and exhales. Then, without looking, he grabs a water skin from the bench, takes a long drag from it, and points it at me. I shake my head. He shrugs, takes another drag, and sets it back on the bench. The crowd isn't screaming for him. They don't even know he exists. Baurus is the Arena maintenance man, the most underappreciated man in existence. And I'm here to interview him.

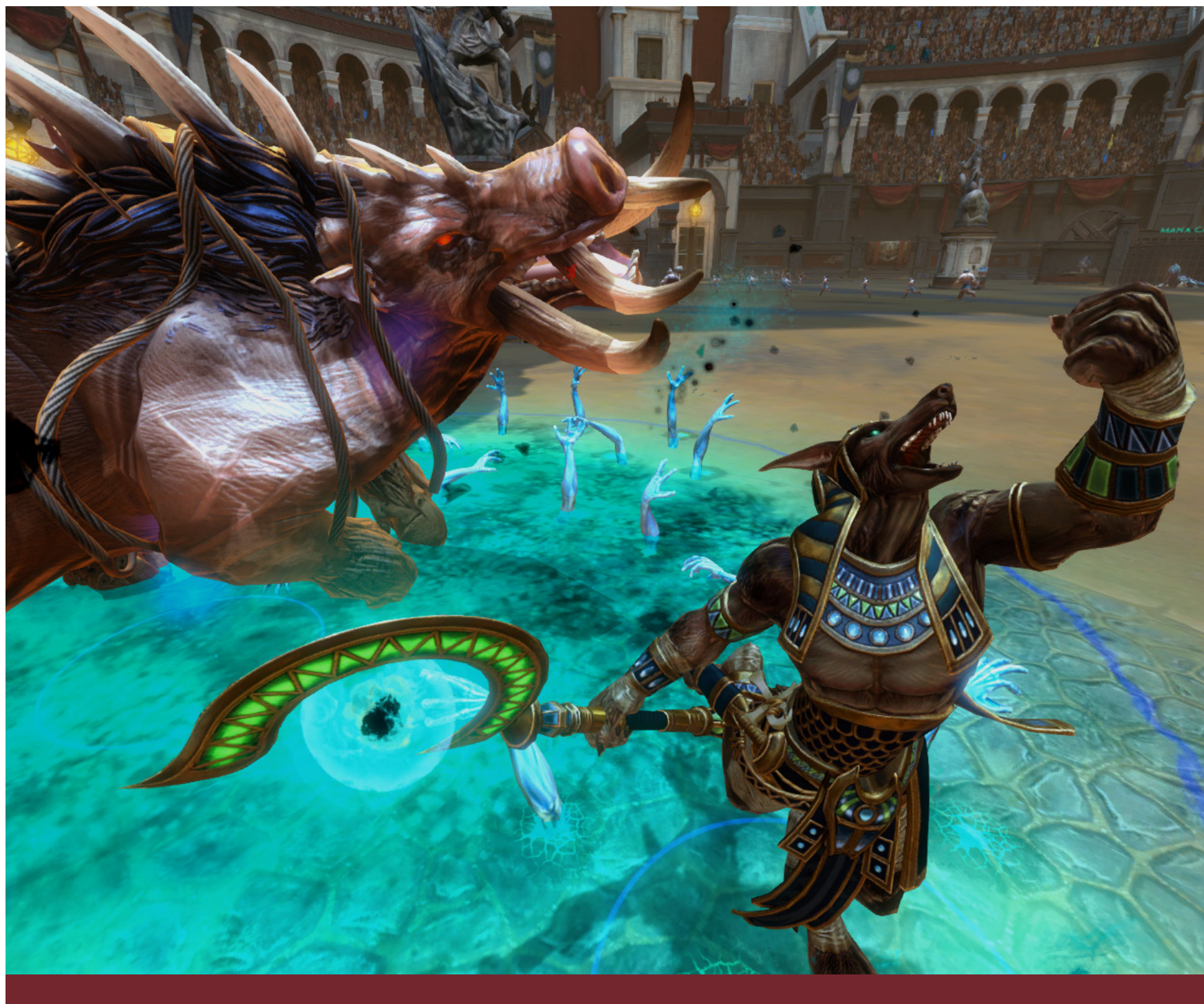
In the torchlight, I can make out several large scars on Baurus' face and chest. Some are old and faded; some still hold stitches. One scar spiders up his neck, across his nose, and into his scalp. It splits his face into two and eats away at his hairline. Another scar runs down his right shoulder; his arm looks sewn-on. He looks tired.

"Hello, Baurus," I say. "Thank you for taking some time to talk with me."

Baurus doesn't reply. He stares at the wall behind me and appears to see something far away beyond it. I wait. A moment passes, and I wonder if he has heard me. I start again: "Hello Baur--"

"No. Thank you," he says. His face grimaces into a smile. "Thank you for talking with me."

Though our conversation often trailed



off into long stretches of silence, I spoke with the giant for over thirty minutes. Here are the highlights from our discussion:

Q: You look like you've had a long day.

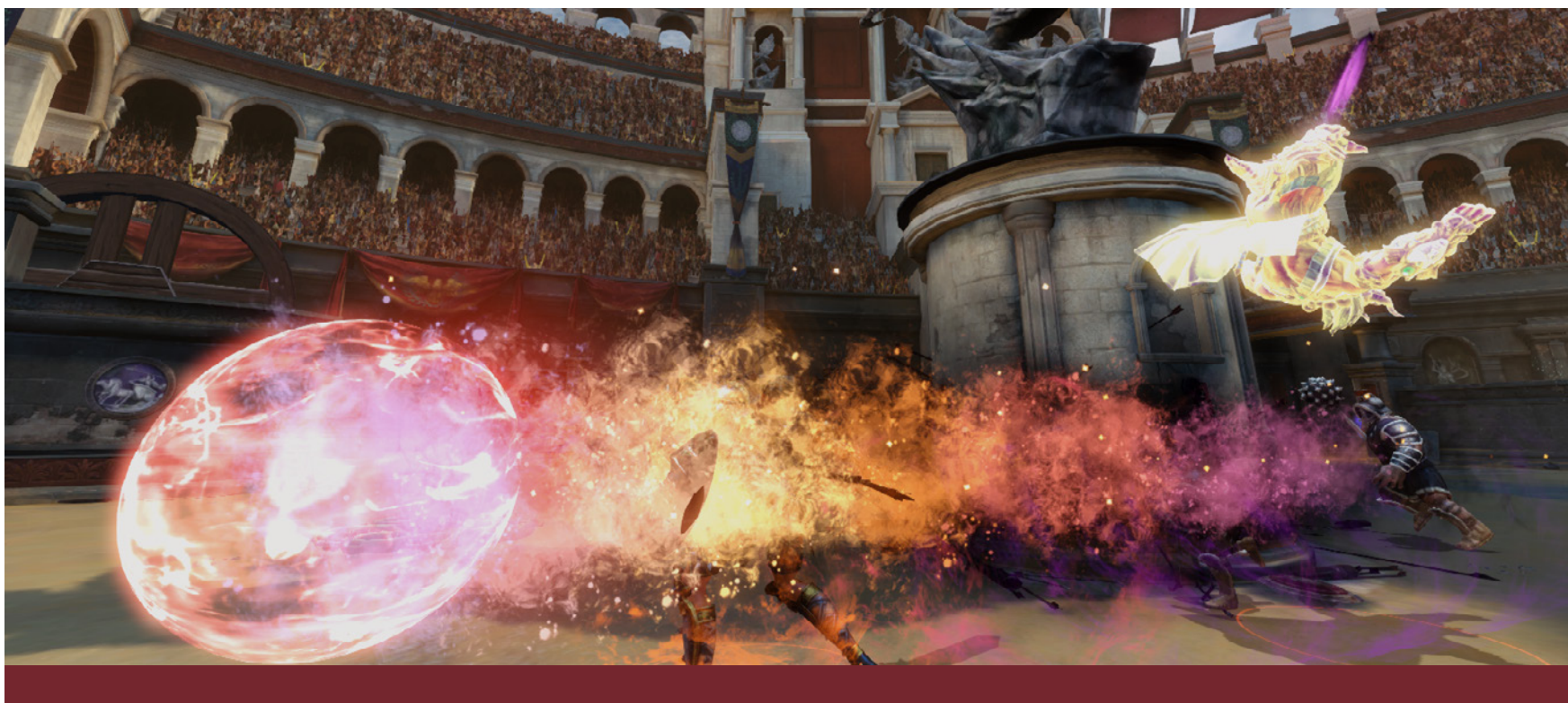
A: Not bad. Nemean Lion didn't want to cooperate. Doesn't like his cage. Don't blame him. But he's gotta be ready for the start of the next fight and--gotta do what you've gotta do. (He snorts.) Funny. Hercules slew it once and became a legend. I tame it every day, a half-million times per day, and I get nothing. Don't misread me. I don't want to be famous. I don't care. And I'm not bitter, either. Swear. Just think it's funny.

Q: How long have you worked in the Arena?

A: Been working for the Arena for ages, feels like. Started with the old one--the one before they started doing all the nighttime matches. (He exhales.) Hated the nighttime matches. Brutal lights. Look at them long enough, they blind you. That's how this happened. (He points at the scar on his face.) Cyclops found a piece of bone and got me good. Almost took me. But at least we had Cyclopes back then. Cyclopes can be reasoned with.

Q: You don't like the new Arena?

A: Didn't say that. I like it okay. Better lights. And daytime. Just can't reason with the creatures no more. Can't talk to the Nemean Lion



or the Erymanthian Boar. And the Basilisk. (He pauses.) Can't reason with them. Any of them.

Q: So why do you keep coming back?

What is it about the job that attracts you?

A: There's a blank space every night. Lasts about twenty minutes, usually. During that time, there are no matches. Just nothing. Sometimes I walk out and lie down in the middle of the Arena. It's electric out there. Even when the seats are empty, you still feel like someone's watching you. Cheering. I don't know what it is. But it keeps bringing me back. Every day. Every night.

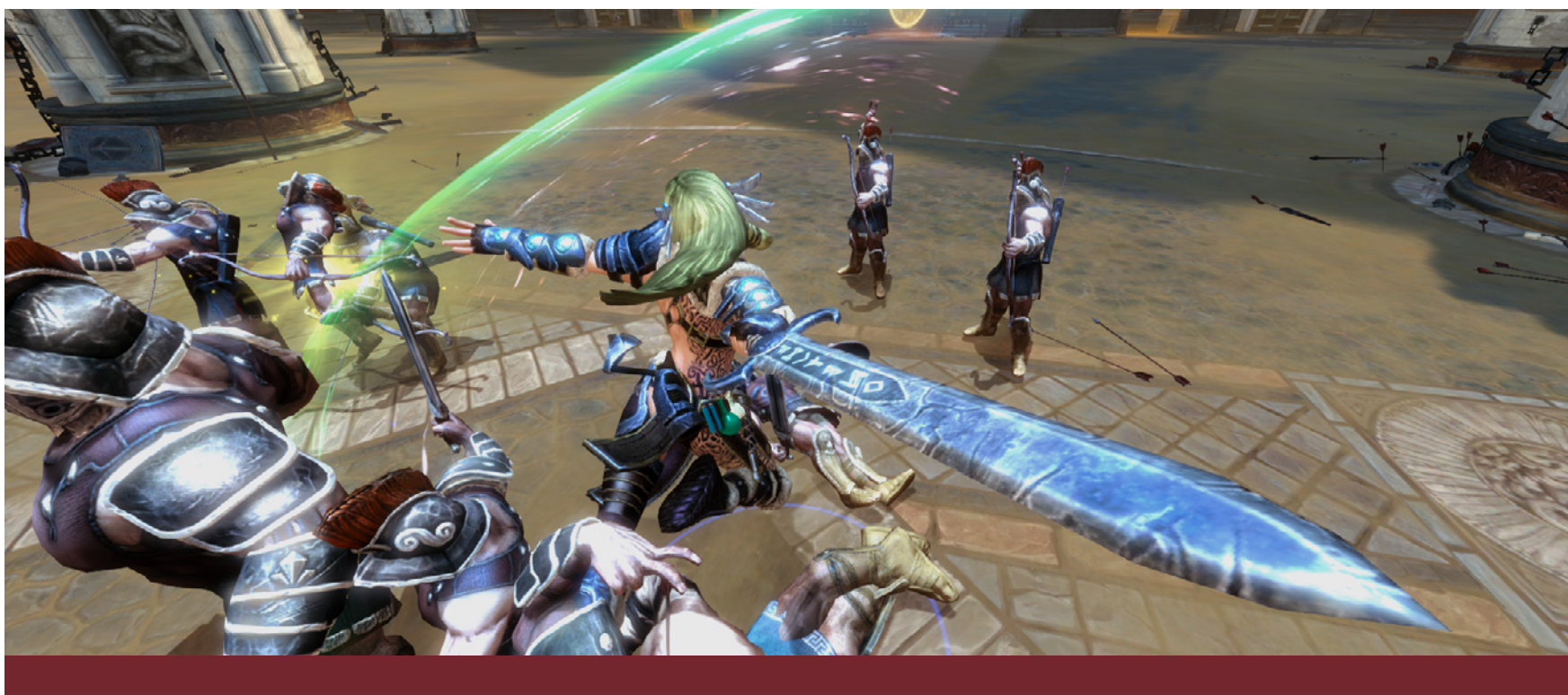
Q: Would you ever fight in the Arena?

A: Against a god? No. Never. Leave that for the young and stupid. I can tame a Nemean Lion, but I can't slay it. Takes a god. I'm just a man.

Q: What would you change about the job?

A: (He pauses.) Yeah. I got something. Stop dropping those damned petals on the ground at the ends of the matches. Can't hardly sweep them up. And they get everywhere. Pit. Stands. Had to get Poseidon to blow them off the roof one time. The roof. (He pauses again.) That's messed up. ■

By Jacob Crawford





Artwork by Maria Ccopa



NEW ARENA - LOOKS DIFFERENT, BUT DOES IT PLAY DIFFERENTLY?

By Kris Sutter & Jorg van der Velden

On a competitive level, nothing beats the conquest map. The entire game is balanced around this MOBA staple of a three lane map with jungle in between the lanes. But the game mode that attracts the greatest number of (casual) players is Arena, and this map has recently received a major visual overhaul. But do the changes that this update brought with it affect play, and if so, how?

The first thing you'll notice when the map loads is the abundance of daylight streaming into the Colosseum. In the old map, the battles were fought under a nighttime sky and the stands, spectators and battlefield all had a muted color scheme to further enforce this theme. Now, with the brightness of day, the color schemes have been changed to look more vibrant. The sunlight hitting the sand almost glares back at you as the spectators cheer you on dressed in a myriad of colors. All this makes the match feel a little bit more frantic, and a little bit more alive.

The actual layout of the map hasn't been changed. It's still a circular arena with a walled in fountain at either end, four pillars in the center of the map and a set of three walls sheltering the buff camps. The towers that were guarding the entrances to the fountain have been replaced by gargoyles on the wall. Functionally they're the same, though the area itself has opened up a little bit with the removal of the towers. This doesn't affect play too much, though 'towerdiving' for a kill is a little riskier, as you can no longer force a player behind the tower to prevent them from getting into the fountain. Luckily, this was rarely a factor, but some players liked this tactic and it's no longer available.

The Minions also no longer spawn from a spawning circle in the fountain, but from doors under the gargoyles. This has slightly changed the pathing of the minions as they no longer turn but walk in almost a straight line towards the middle of the arena. The





effect on gameplay is barely worth mentioning. The only difference being that the minions will stay less long in a perfectly placed AoE effect like Poseidon's 'Whirlpool' or Kukulcan's 'Tornadoes'. But the frequency of this happening was down to once in a lifetime, so nobody's really going to notice this change.

The minions, siege towers, buff camps and portals have all received major visual updates. There's now a clear distinction in the design of the opposing minions and you can now tell them apart by more than just the red or green health bar over their heads. The portals have been changed to take a more prominent role in the design, and minions entering it are visually sucked inside. As the tickets count down, the structure holding the portal deteriorates as well, showing cracks and pieces falling off at set totals.

The biggest visual changes belong to the siege tower and buff camps. It is actually incorrect to refer to the minion that spawns every ten kills as the siege tower after the update. It is now a hulking giant carrying a massive bomb on his shoulders. It's effect on the ticket counter when reaching the enemy portal is still the same (deducting ten tickets from the enemy ticket counter), but the animation is completely different. Instead of just vanishing into the portal, the 'siege giant' throws the bomb into the portal before being sucked in himself. It is important to note that the moment the animation starts, the siege giant is

invulnerable and the ten tickets are deducted then.

The buff camps are no longer the cyclopes we all know and love from the conquest map. Instead, they're replaced by buff beasts. A basilisk, a boar and a lion to be more precise. Each camp only has one beast carrying the buff in it and while the change from three cyclopes to one beast might seem insignificant, it does affect some aspects of the game. Most notably, clearing the camps is a lot easier now. While the total health of the big cyclops and beast don't differ too much, players take a lot less damage with the small cyclopes removed. It also makes it easier for one player to quickly clear all the buffs, so spawn management has become more important with this change. It also affects gods like Tyr or Ratatoskr with the Emerald Acorn, as their heals are based on the number of targets hit with the respective ability. While they can still heal a bit when they're on low health and running past the camps, the amount will be significantly lower and can be the difference between living or dying.

Overall, the visual update is mostly just that: visual. But as you can see in the previous paragraphs, the changes do affect a small group of players and they will need to adjust their tactics a little bit. But it still gives players exactly what it offered before: a hectic all-out team brawl. Just prettier than before. ■

By Kris Sutter & Jorg van der Velden

GOD RE-ENVISIONED: MAGE HERO TWINS

By Jorg van der Velden

This time in God Re-Envisioned we're going to blur the line between redesigning and theorizing a little. The god we're reworking is already in the game, but in his lore, he and his brother are almost a single entity. So we had to introduce him as well, and thus create a character that plays as one, but is actually two. I introduce to you: Hunahpu and Xbalanque, The Mayan Hero Twins!

The story of the Hero Twins actually starts long before they are born, with their father Hun and his twin brother. They were accomplished ball players, but the noise they made while playing disturbed the Xibal, the Lords of the Underworld. The Xibal devised a plan to punish Hun and his brother, and invited them to play ball on their court. On their way to the underworld, the brothers were tested and lured into traps by the Xibal, humiliating them multiple times before the game itself actually started. When the game started, the brothers were distracted and did not see the Xibal replaced the ball with a bladed one, and they both died right then and there. The Xibal buried their bodies in the court and propped Hun's head up in a tree as a warning to all.

Xquic happened to pass by Hun's head, and after talking for a while he impregnated her by spitting in her hand. She went to Hun's mother to raise her children with her, and after verifying her identity through a number of tests, Xquic moved in and Hunahpu and Xbalanque grew up with their mother, grandmother and two older brothers: One Howler Monkey and One Artisan.

The older brothers were of the jealous sort, and they made the Twins do their chores while they lazed about and had fun. One of these chores was hunting birds, and after skillfully bringing them down with their blow darts, they returned home every day with a

good stock of food for dinner. One day, they returned to their older brothers without birds, telling them they got caught high in a tree and couldn't reach them. One Howler Monkey and One Artisan, prideful as they were, went to the tree where the birds were supposed to be, and climbed up to get them. This was a trick of the Twins though, as they were fed up with the jealous behaviour of their brothers. High in the tree, the elder brothers were having difficulties getting down again, and the Twins advised them to tie their loincloths around their waist to make climbing easier. The moment the elder brothers did that they turned into monkeys, and the Twins laughed at them as they climbed down in this humiliating form.

But this was just the early life of the Hero Twins, who were naturally shrewd from a young age. This shrewdness was displayed again when they had a run in with Seven Macaw, a bird demon that grew so powerful that he declared himself The Sun and The Moon, decorated himself with gold and jewels, and replaced his teeth with gemstones as well. When the Twins encountered him, they hit him with their blow darts and knocked several teeth out of his mouth. In his rage, he attacked them, but the Twins were able to escape. They asked an elderly couple that passed by to pose as a doctor and a dentist, knowing the arrogant demon would want to have his bejeweled teeth placed back in.



Artwork by Michael Mendonça





The elderly couple replaced them with corn, as the twins instructed them to do, and when Seven Macaw saw his own smile he died of shame.

Living lives full of adventure, their most significant one was when they matched their wits and skills against the Xibal, the Lords of the Underworld that killed their father. The Twins' grandmother was afraid that her grandchildren would befall the same fate as her children, so she hid the equipment of Hun and his brother. However, the Twins found the equipment with the help of a rat, who chewed through the ropes that kept the equipment tied to the roof in the attic. The boys quickly discovered they were naturally gifted at the game and played whenever they could.

History tends to repeat itself, and it's the same in this case. Hunahpu and Xbalanque were so loud that the Xibal were disturbed by their noise. Like their father before them, they were invited to play in the underworld, on the court of the Xibal. The Lords threw the same tests at them as they did with their father, but the Twins were too smart to fall for them. They played the matches against the Xibal and lost them on purpose, just to defeat all of the tests they had devised. Eventually the Lords tried to trick the Twins into jumping over an oven in an attempt to kill them. The Twins saw through the ruse and immediately jumped into the oven, making the Xibal believe they had finally won. But the boys knew they

would trickle their ashes into the river, which was the only way they could be reborn. And the Lords of the Underworld did what the boys expected.

Once their ashes hit the water, the Twins were reborn into catfish, only to grow into young men again. They looked different than before, but retained everything of their former selves. They traveled the underworld performing amazing feats of resurrection, most notably of themselves. The Xibal eventually heard of these traveling entertainers and invited them to their court. Once the boys arrived, the Lords did not recognize them and the Twins performed their show of sacrificing and resurrecting each other. Caught up in the show, the Xibal asked to have the amazing feat performed on them. The twins, however, did not resurrect the two lords they sacrificed, ensuring total defeat of the Xibal. Having lost, the Underworld could no longer be the place of splendor it used to be and turned into a dark and grim place.

As they climbed out of the underworld, the Twins didn't stop when they reached the surface, continuing to climb into the sky where they became the Sun and the Moon.

While Xbalanque was indeed a skillful hunter, when paired with his brother incredible feats of magic fill their stories. So the Mayan Hero Twins Hunahpu and Xbalanque tread onto the Battlefield of the Gods as mages, tricking their opponents whenever they can.

| Name | Type | Description |
|--------------|----------|--|
| Sun and Moon | Passive | At any one moment, only one of the brothers is dominant. When Hunahpu is dominant, his light illuminates the area around him and increases the range of allied abilities and autoattacks by 10%, including his own. When Xbalanque is dominant, the night sky makes it hard for the enemies to see, giving allies and the Twins a 10% chance to not be affected by abilities and autoattacks. |
| Monkey Tails | Active 1 | The Hero Twins turn up to two enemies in close proximity to each other into monkeys, making them unable to attack or cast spells for a short amount of time. |
| Blow Darts | Active 2 | Each brother shoots from his blow pipe, dealing damage to a single target and applying a small slow. |
| Bladed Ball | Active 3 | The hero twins kick the bladed ball the Xibal used to kill their father, damaging everyone in a line in front of them as the ball slices through them. |
| Resurrection | Ultimate | The passive brother sacrifices the dominant brother, only to resurrect him again in a dazzling show. All enemies in a large area around the hero twins are stunned for a short time and an additional effect occurs based on which brother was sacrificed. If Hunahpu is sacrificed, all affected enemies are blinded when the stun ends. If Xbalanque is sacrificed, the enemies are disoriented when the stun ends. This ability can be activated before points are invested, but that will only result in switching the dominant brother. |

We'll start at the end, where the Twins become the Sun and the Moon. This passive embodies the effects of day and night on people's ability to hunt. The increased range when Hunahpu is dominant can literally be the difference between life and death, of the enemy that is. It allows allies with ranged attacks to get out an extra attack before they need to move again, and they're back in range faster. The other advantage is that people are surprised by the increased range, as almost any player with some experience in the game has an intuitive feel for the ranges of attacks.

When Xbalanque is dominant, 'Sun and Moon' takes a defensive turn, granting every ally in range a small change to evade the damage completely. While it is essentially





praying to RNGesus, it can make a huge difference in any fight. The biggest benefit will be in lane, however, where the Twins and nearby allies are constantly targeted by attacks and abilities. Negating this poke, and being able to draw minion aggro a little bit more safely, means that the Twins and any nearby allies can play more aggressively than the enemy and push them back.

Let's go into Hunahpu and Xbalanque's early life, where they humiliated their older brothers by turning them into monkeys. 'Monkey Tails' forces the same fate on up to two enemies, making them unable to do anything besides moving around. Effectively disarming and silencing the enemy at the same time can swing the fight greatly in your favor, removing those affected from the fight for a short time. Coupling this with the slow from 'Blow Darts', or a root from an ally, puts the enemy in an extremely vulnerable position. As with any CC (crowd control) ability, it can be used both offensively, setting up for allies or other abilities, or defensively, buying time for an escape.

The first real enemy the Twins encountered

was Seven Macaw, and the start of his defeat was a beautiful application of force from a blow dart to the face. They bring this skill to the battlefield with 'Blow Darts'. Similar to Serqet's 'Cobra's Kiss', 'Blow Darts' fires two projectiles quickly after each other. Each of those applies both the slow and the damage, so hitting both can grind an enemy to a halt. If you're quick enough you can retarget to a different enemy, slowing down two pursuers (or runners if you're on the aggressive), giving you a little bit more breathing space for the rest of your plans.

The greatest legend of the Hero Twins can be distilled into two parts: playing the ball game against the Xibal and defeating them with their carnival show, as it were. 'Bladed Ball' embodies part one of this legend, where the Xibal replace the regular ball with a bladed one. This ability fires off a ball that damages every enemy in a rectangle in front of the Twins. There is not much else, as this is a standard wave clearing ability without any gimmicks tied to it.

The second part of Hunahpu's and Xbalanque's greatest legend revolves around their performance of sacrificing and resurrecting each other. The display

stunned viewers, and 'Resurrection' does exactly the same to all enemies in an area around the Twins. The secondary effect is based on which brother is dominant at that point, tying into their soon to be eternal positions in the sky. The glaring sun blinds enemies when Hunahpu is sacrificed, similar to Ra's 'Divine Light'. The night sky confuses anyone traveling through the Meso-American jungle, and enemies are disoriented when Xbalanque is sacrificed. 'Resurrection' exerts enormous amount of control in a teamfight, and is capable of greatly disrupting the enemy. It does require the Twins to get out of position to affect the entire enemy team if they're positioned correctly. As the Twins do not have a naturally high health pool, this can result in a very quick death.

Having said that, the Twins could be an interesting choice for a support. They have the required CC and a good initiate with 'Resurrection' if they invest in Blink. Their survivability would entirely

depend on items however, and they are unable of tanking like a Guardian early in the game. The benefits of the passive 'Sun and Moon' balance this out for the most part, especially when Xbalanque is the dominant one and 10% of all hits are negated.

A safer, and more predictable, role would in the middle lane. 'Bladed Ball' is a solid wave clearing ability, and both 'Monkey Tails' and 'Blow Darts' provide a measure of safety in case the enemy jungler ganks the lane. Building some protections or health might still be a good idea, as 'Resurrection' is an AoE (Area of Effect) centered on the Twins and requires quite aggressive positioning to affect the largest amount of enemies possible.

This ends the story of Hunahpu and Xbalanque, the quintessential heroes of Mayan Mythology who now take their eternal place in the skies. ■

By Jorg van der Velden





TYING THE CONNECTIONS: SCYLLA

By Jorg van der Velden

Here we are again, back to tie the connections between a goddess' abilities and her lore. This time we're looking at someone who isn't technically a goddess, but part of greek myth all the same. It's the monstrous little girl that hurts way more than any character has the right to: Scylla, Horror of the Sea.

Scylla's tale is riddled with themes that seem to drown Greek mythology: desire, jealousy and spite. The most accepted version of her legend has Scylla born as a beautiful sea nymph, or Nereid, that was besieged with many suitors. She turned all of them down, as none of them spiked her interest enough, and she decided to remain with the other Nereids.

Glaucus was one of those suitors, falling in love with Scylla the moment he laid his eyes upon her. But he wasn't a normal human anymore, as his lower body changed into a fishtail after chewing on a plant. Scylla, horrified by his appearance, mistook him for a monster and fled, leaving the heartbroken Glaucus behind.

Glaucus was not one to give up so easily: he was so smitten with Scylla that he went to the witch

Circe for a magical potion that would earn him the Nereid's affection. But it wouldn't be a Greek myth if there wasn't a love triangle involved, and in this case Circe fell in love with Glaucus as hard as he fell in love with Scylla. She tried her hardest to get his heart off of the Sea Nymph and into her hands, but Glaucus could only think of Scylla.

This is where we touch upon the jealousy and spite, as Circe could not stand having the man she loves love someone else. In a fit of jealous rage Circe poisoned the waters Scylla used to bathe. Upon entering the waters Scylla changed into the monstrous form she's known for: the head and torso of a woman, six baying dogs around her waist and the tail of a fish. The dogs attacked and devoured anyone who came close, beyond her ability to control, making her flee to the edge



Artwork by Dorine Pittet



D. Pittet



of the strait she used for bathing, opposite the whirlpool Charybdis, to live out her days alone.

Now those navigating the strait are caught between Charybdis and Scylla. Move too much away from one, and you will run into the 'arms' of the other. Coming too close to Scylla means losing six members of your crew, one to each of the dogs who come up out of the water and devour the men whole. Coming too close to Charybdis meant certain doom for your ship, as the whirling waters would suck it down to the depths.

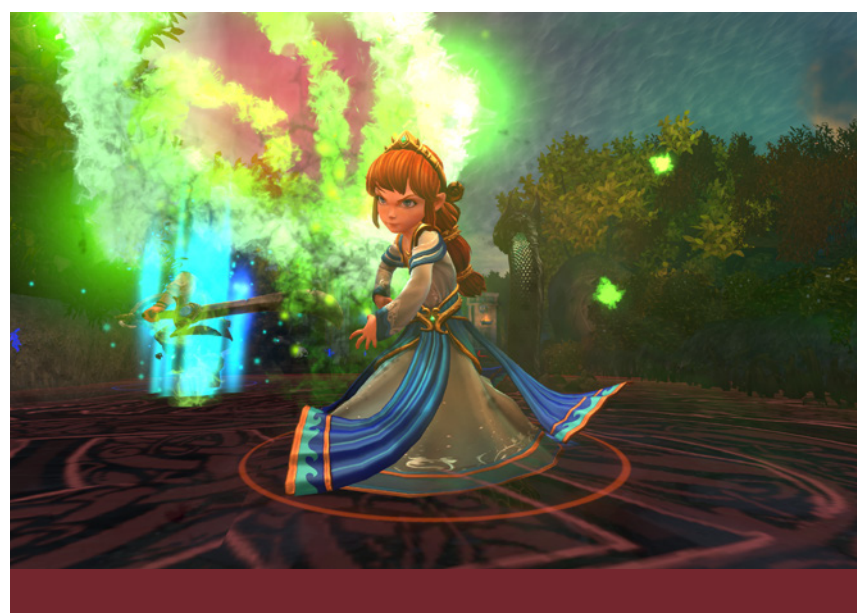
Before we delve into her abilities, I want to take a moment and look at her appearance in the game. Reading just the above description of Scylla, it is strange that Hi-Rez depicted her as a little girl. But there are a number of references to a 'child-like laughter' in the myths that include her. The myth above is also just one of the most accepted versions, as there are also tales that tell her being born in the monstrous form she has. Both of these would explain her young appearance in the game, and make it lore appropriate. The fishtail we might never find out, as we can't really look under her skirt. Which

is better that way, because who would look under a young girl's skirt? (Except for the Japanese that is.)

The shortage of dogs in the game, four instead of six, has no connection to the lore as it is specifically mentioned she has six dog heads. Because of this is have the strong suspicion that it's an esthetic choice. The way they appear from her during her ult, or when she jumps, makes it hard to include two more without making it too crowded or the heads losing their intimidating look due to being too small.

Now, let's (finally) get into her abilities!

QUICK LEARNER





This passive doesn't have any direct connections into her lore. Nowhere is it stated that Scylla is knowledgeable or a quick study, as most of her mentions are centered around her being one of the two dangers in a narrow stretch of sea. However, if you look at the stories including the child-like laughter, and the subsequent young look attached to it, it makes sense. Young children learn much faster than adults, and a child-like monster would reasonably have the same innate ability.

SIC 'EM

The origin of this ability isn't hard to imagine, as the animation pretty accurately shows what happens when you get too close to Scylla. Devouring those hit would be slightly broken, so a root and cripple is an 'adequate' replacement. This only flies when you look at Scylla as being born monstrous, as the Nereid legend states that she has no control over them at all and 'Sic 'Em' is clearly a command. It does enforce the idea of the dogs being separate entities, even though they're attached to her,

as she needs to command them to attack.

CRUSH

Let's get it out of the way: no connection to lore. None. Zip. Nada. But then the question rises, where DOES this ability come from? The only theory I can think of is the choice of making Scylla a mage. The animation shows a magical circle of some sorts, and she can control whenever it detonates. These kinds of 'magical traps' are a common occurrence in fantasy literature and fantasy games. With her being a mage, especially a young one, having an ability based on such a basic magical effect (assuming it is, based on how often it shows up in games/literature) is not a big stretch of the imagination.

Still lore inappropriate though.

SENTINEL

Back to the doggies! Well, one of them. While it is never mentioned she used her dogs to look out for ships, it's not that unrealistic to think she would have.

The only things that ever attacked the ships that sailed too close are the dogs, implying that Scylla never left her home, or didn't venture too far from it. Using the dogs to 'patrol' for ships sailing by would be entirely feasible. All of this is still assuming the 'born a monster' origin and she has some control over them.

The teleportation part of Sentinel is entirely a game-y solution to Scylla not having any mobility as a squishy mage. No matter which origin you follow, Scylla is a decidedly immobile monster, always lurking in the same place.

I'M A MONSTER

This is about as lore accurate as it can possibly get. The dogs attack a target, and with the sheer amount of deletion potential this ability has they might as well devour their hapless victims. The lore inaccuracies that are present are mostly due to the model having too few heads or her age being not specifically mentioned anywhere in the 'born a monster' origin. Both of these points have been discussed before.

As a whole, Hi-Rez has taken a fair amount of liberties in designing Scylla. Those liberties are

understandable though, as Scylla is a very one-dimensional monster in Greek mythology. The Nereid origin provides some depth to her personality, but not a lot to base a MOBA kit on. While not the most lore accurate character in the game, there's no denying the fact that deleting the opposition with a Crush, Sick 'Em, I'm a Monster combo is extremely satisfying. ■

By Jorg van der Velden





Artwork by Emily Barnes



Emily Barnes



THE GAME CHANGERS

By Derrick Moody

Most people who play SMITE or any other competitive game have seen the effects of meta in play. Whether it be that one day Warriors became the most played class due to an item change or the next day when Mages become the strongest class due to statistical changes, meta will always be prevalent. Regardless, if those examples seem a bit farfetched, they are not far from the truth. From every buff to nerf, to every god addition or god remodel/rework, every change in SMITE, has some effect on the game's meta. Don't forget that finding unnoticed mechanics, discovering efficient and effective builds for gods, or learning different play styles with a god help changes the meta as well.

NEW GODS

With every patch that adds a new god, the meta changes. Whether that god is strong or weak, it takes time for the meta to adjust to the new

addition. Many people don't see the true potential of certain gods until months after their release. Let's take the original Nu Wa kit for example. In her release video it is stated that she is a very strong tower pusher. It is also stated in game as well. Many people at the time of her release played her offensively, forgetting that she can push lanes at extreme rates. When this was realized in competitive play weeks later, an uproar was made by some of the player base claiming that she was too strong.

REWORKS/REMODELS

The Gods get old as SMITE gets older. Gods that have been around since the beginning or near it seem to stand out in the game- and not in a good way. With the additions of beautiful and detailed models such as that of Bellona or efficient and fun kit designs like Ratatoskr, gods with kits like Zeus or in game models like Vamana seem to not look

or feel as polished. When Hi-Rez finally decides to remake/remodel these characters, it can create changes in the meta similar to that of a new god. An example of this would be when Bastet was remodeled and had her kit adjusted. She became incredibly strong in the meta at the time and it took several patches before she was finally toned down. Even after the changes and play style adaptations, she still remains a prevalent figure in the SMITE meta.

ITEM CHANGES

If you are going to play SMITE, you will build items for the character that you choose to play. Whether you choose those items with a purpose, all items in SMITE offer some sort of passive, active, or statistical benefit to its user. Some items offer better benefits to its users than others and that helps dictate the item meta, and most times, the meta overall. Just like the increase in gods, so does the increase in item diversity and creation. Whenever a new item is added or an old item is changed, it can either have a rather large impact or a small one. Some seemingly small changes like possibly increasing the price of a rather popular item like the Power Potions of Might by 50 gold can turn the meta on its head. Seemingly large changes like a decrease in cooldown on certain actives like Meditation could have little to no effect on the meta given their inefficient use to begin with.

CONCLUSION

When it comes down to it, the meta can be changed by anything, big or small. The meta helps create balance and order within the player base. It's the reason the game keeps people interested in playing, even if you don't notice the change. The game has had and will always have an ever-changing meta, you just have to be the one ready to adapt when the time comes... or not! ■

By Derrick Moody



IN THEORY: PANTHEON EDITION

Article By Timothy Tian Zhang Wai | Artwork By Amanda Callesen

This month, we theorize the inclusion of an entirely new pantheon in SMITE. Mesopotamia, here we come!

The world is filled with rich and diverse mythologies, ranging from the regions of Europe (Celtic Myths) all the way to the lands of Asia (Chinese Myths). There have been discussions within the SMITE community regarding these myths and how it could be incorporated into the game itself. Mesopotamian Mythology is not one that is as recognizable as the tales of the Grecian or Nordic myths. These myths are believed to have originated from the Middle East circa 3500 to 330 B.C. The word 'Mesopotamia' is actually Greek for the phrase 'The Land Between The Rivers' - the rivers referring to the Tigris and the Euphrates, the region from which Mesopotamia was born. Many stories find their source from this

pantheon, the most famous one being the tale of the legendary Gilgamesh. In terms of SMITE, let's see how this pantheon can be integrated into the game in three forms: gods, items and maps.

GODS

Apsu, while not a god, is believed to have existed before creation itself. Very much like Chronos or Nox, Apsu is a primordial being. It is a watery abyss, without an actual physical humanoid form. It is said that the divine power of the gods were extracted from Apsu. The entire cosmos is believed to have been supported upon this watery abyss and could



not be conquered even by Gilgamesh. In SMITE, Apsu may present itself as a Guardian. Similar to Geb where all is supported by the earth, Apsu supported the world upon its watery shoulders. Abilities may also have water origins due to the nature of Apsu.

Before the creation of the world, there were only two beings, Apsu and his consort, Tiamat. From them, other gods were born. Eventually, a war ensued between the old and the young gods. Tiamat rode as the head of the army of old gods. The young were led by Marduk, a warrior with fire as his breath. Specifically for the battle, Marduk was equipped with bows and arrows, a net and the seven winds in his arsenal. Using the winds, he forced them down Tiamat's throat until she was distended. After her death, Marduk took her body and from it, he formed the sky, stars, earth and mountains. For SMITE purposes, Marduk may once again retrieve his bow and arrows as a Hunter or call upon his army leader roots as a fearless Warrior. Either way, the wind element would most probably be the main feature in his kit since it was the winds which aided him in killing Tiamat.

The 'Epic of Gilgamesh', considered the first great work of literature, houses the tale of the mighty warrior, Gilgamesh. The poem starts off with Gilgamesh in his youth. As the king of Uruk, he abused his powers and oppressed the people. The gods feared of what their future holds for them should Gilgamesh rise in power. To control him, the gods devised a plan. They created an equal to Gilgamesh named Enkidu. Enkidu did not become his rival however. Instead, they became inseparable companions when Gilgamesh saw Enkidu as a form of his own portion of humanity. In the end, one of them had to die and it was decided by the gods that Enkidu was to be at the end of this fate. Heartbroken, Gilgamesh set off on a quest in search of immortality



but was met with none. Gilgamesh's story is certainly one that is grim and tragic. This legendary king may be theorized as a Warrior or even a Mage in SMITE. His Mage attributes can be extracted from the fact that he was considered two parts god and one part man. He was also endowed with supernatural powers.

ITEMS

Many items in SMITE lend themselves from the myths as well. For example, Book of Thoth comes from the Egyptian god, Thoth, who is believed to have been author of all knowledge. Hide of Leviathan was also one of the purchasable items in the shop until it was removed in 2014. Leviathan refers to a sea monster mentioned in myths.

In Mesopotamian mythology, there existed a ruler who established the greatest library in the ancient world, filled with tablets inscribed in the writing systems of that time (cuneiform). He was called King Ashurbanipal. It would be very much possible to introduce an item called Tablets of Ashurbanipal where it would increase Magical/Physical

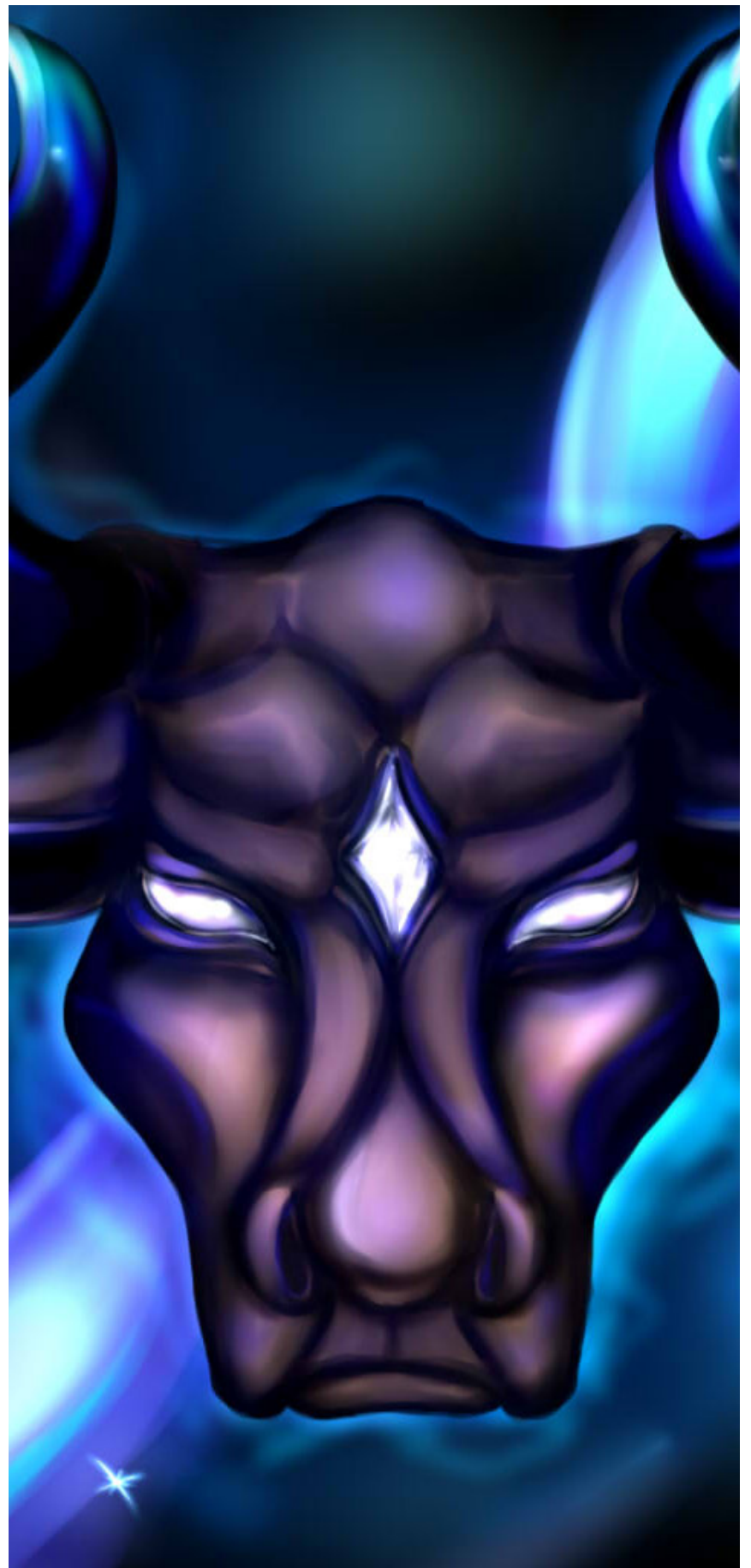
Power from the knowledge found in the texts.

During Gilgamesh's and Enkidu's travels, they encountered the Bull of Heaven and eventually slayed the creature. Later, it is mentioned that they brought the head of the bull home in triumph. Bull's Head may be another item where its passive could serve the purpose of decreasing the lengths of stuns and/or roots. The Bull's Head is not something that is easily overlooked and enemies performing a stun and/or root would be transfixed by it, thereby unable to concentrate on their own actions.

From the story of Marduk, after the younger gods defeated Tiamat, they were elated with joy. This joy faded when they discovered that they had to perform their respective duties as deities. Complaints were sent and eventually, Ea, the god of magical spells, conjured up clay figures that would perform these duties for the gods instead. These clay figures are believed to be humankind itself. An Active could be introduced here. Ea's Figures would increase the damage output of minions in a radius around a god for short duration of time.

MAP

For a new map, the region of Mesopotamian culture would be the main setting of it all. It could be a circular, Arena-like area with the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, at both ends. The people of the time treated the rivers with great respect since they watered their crops. Therefore, the rivers on the map may function as objectives which could bring about some form of benefit such as an increase in gold per second. Another form of architecture found in Mesopotamia was the Ziggurat. These buildings were temples and had a very distinct shape - a sort of cubic pyramid. The Ziggurat was seen as a path to Heaven and in this map, conquering the Ziggurat



may be the path to winning the game mode.

That's all that I have for now on the theoretical inclusion of the Mesopotamian pantheon in SMITE. It would, in my opinion, be a great addition to an already rather extensive pool of mythologies and gods. With that, I conclude this article with hopes of a new pantheon arriving soon in the Battleground of the Gods! ■

By Timothy Tian Zhang Wai

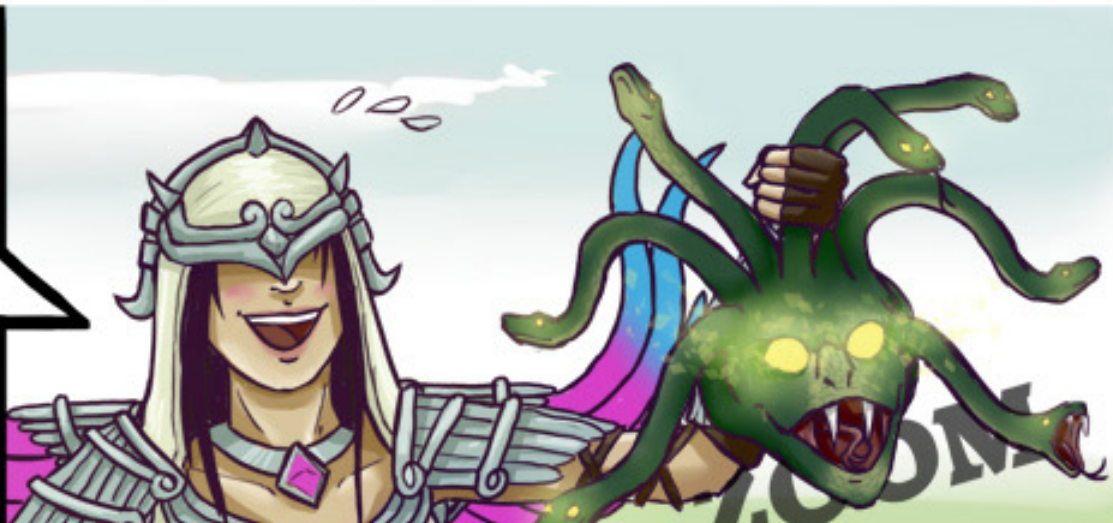


HOU YI DANCES WITH SUNS



Artwork by Holly Webster

Whew, well it took a while but I finally killed Medusa. I took her head as a trophy! See?



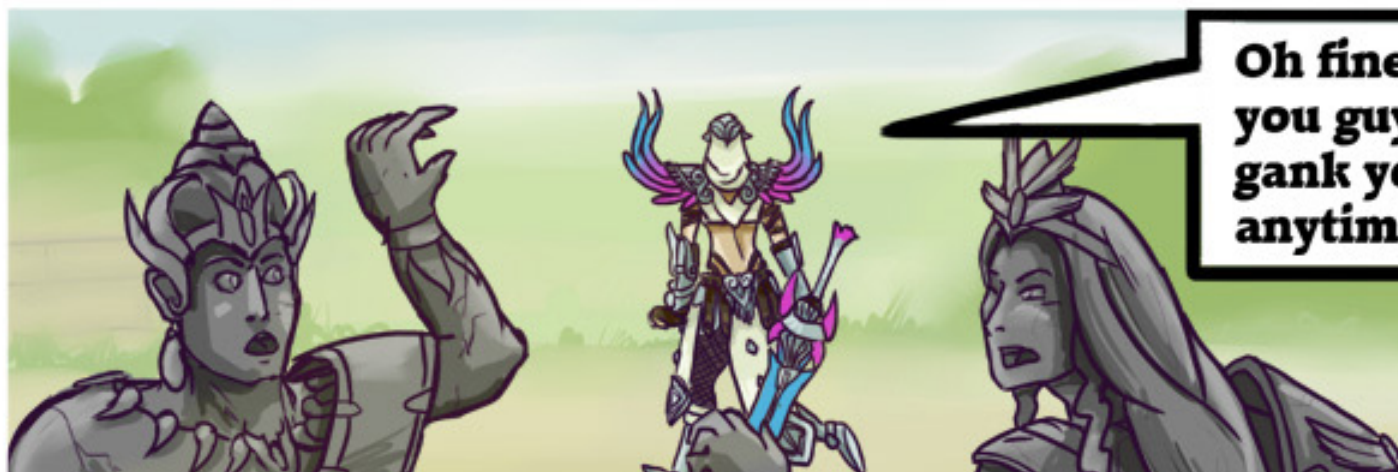
Crickets



Look, I know I fed early, but this kill was really hard. The least you could do is acknowledge it!



Oh fine, screw you guys. See if I gank your lane anytime soon.



Comic Concept by Jon V | Artwork by Gwendoline Martin

WALLPAPER

Below, you can find our newest wallpaper you can use to decorate your desktop, tablet, or mobile device with. You could also print it out as a poster!



SMITE STATS

By SMITEstuff.com



The guys and girls over at SMITEstuff have put together a set of statistics from this month in SMITE that you may find interesting. They can be found below, but be sure to check them out!

The percentages shown below are the average of all games played between 20th June to 20th July.

MOST POPULAR GODS:

- Neith - 18.04%
- Ymir - 12.94%
- Ares - 12.37%
- Bellona - 10.95%
- Ah Puch - 10.83%

LEAST POPULAR GODS

- Vamana - 1.37%
- Zhong Kui - 1.63%
- Arachne - 2.32%
- Kumbhakarna - 2.35%
- Osiris - 2.47%

TOP 5 GODS RISING IN POPULARITY

- Nox - 70.85%
- Zeus - 30.99%
- Apollo - 27.33%
- Ao Kuang - 24.01%
- Hun Batz - 23.81%

• TOP 5 GODS FALLING IN POPULARITY

- Sylvanus - -67.89%
- Ullr - -60.79%
- Nemesis - -57.15%
- Bakasura - -51.03%
- Bastet - -46.90%

TOP 5 SKINS

- Nu Wa - Water Dancer - 39.75%
- Loki - Infiltrator - 39.10%
- Isis - Scarlet Coven - 33.60%
- Medusa - Black Gorgon - 32.55%
- Geb - G.E.B. 1 - 31.98%

BOTTOM 5 SKINS

- Ymir - Twitchymir - 0.18%
- Xbalanque - Football Star 2014 - 0.24%
- Xbalanque - Weltmeister 2014 - 0.47%
- Neith - Carnival Queen - 0.62%
- Thor - Iron Gamer - 0.87%



MEN FIGHT. GODS SMITE.



SMITE

BATTLEGROUND OF THE GODS

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**Newest God Announced:
Khepri - The Dawn Bringer
See You Next Issue!**